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AUTHOR Dellit, Jim; Armstrong, Peter, Ed.
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ABSTRACT

Intended for teachers and teacher-librarians in primary and secondary schools in South Australia, this booklet offers guidelines for organizing a literature festival. The booklet presents information in response to such questions as, What is a literature festival? How big does it have to be? What time is involved? Why have a literature festival? Who will communicate decisions? and When will the festival be held? The booklet concludes with a section showing how to resolve questions already raised, a random list of things that might happen, and a list of additional resources. (EL)

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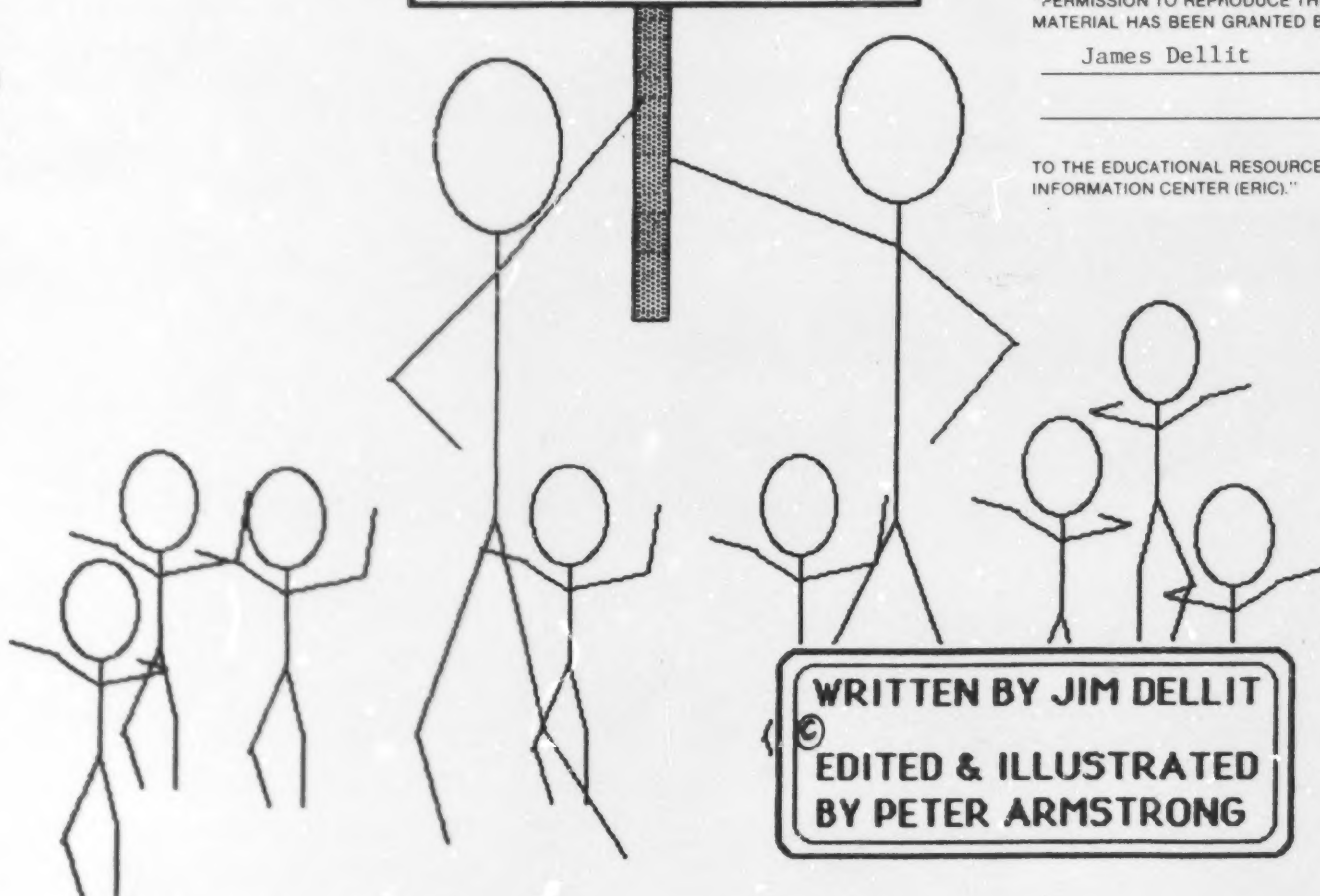
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ORGANIZING A LITERATURE FESTIVAL IN YOUR SCHOOL

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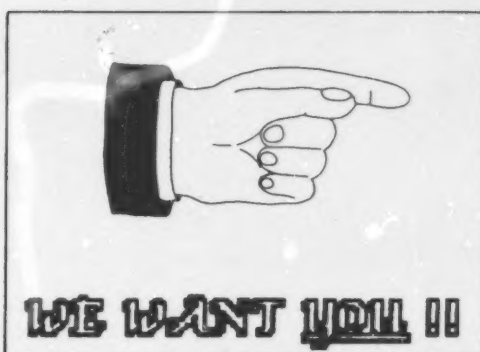
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1

GETTING INTERESTED

WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR ?



WE WANT YOU !!

This booklet is directed at:

◇ teachers
and ◇ teacher-librarians

in ◇ primary schools
◇ secondary schools

who are interested in organizing a
"Literature Festival" in their schools.

WHAT IS A LITERATURE FESTIVAL ?

A Literature Festival is a

- ◇ class
- ◇ group of classes
- ◇ faculty
- ◇ whole school

or

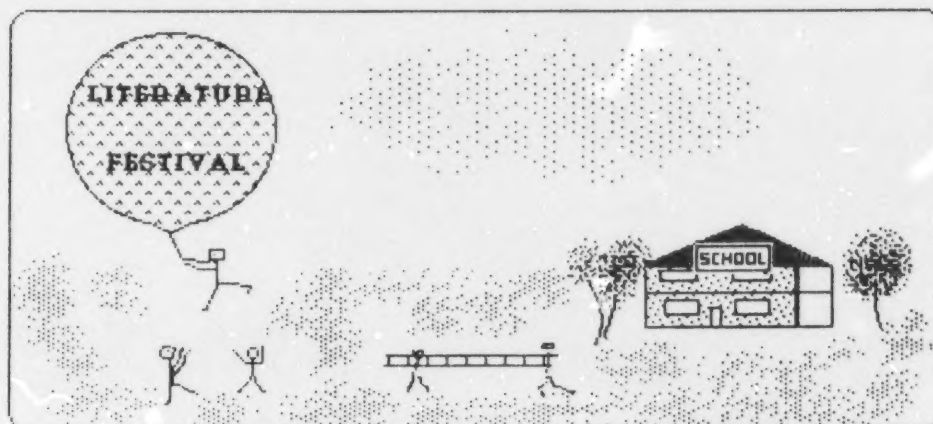
event, which focuses on literature (in its widest sense, including media other than writing). It involves students, teachers and parents **reflecting** on their experiences of reading, listening to and watching literature. It involves them in **creating literature**, and it also, most importantly, involves them in **sharing** their creations and responses.

In a school which is having a Literature Festival, you might notice:

- ◇ lots of posters in the foyer, in classrooms, in the canteen, in corridors, etc., about books, stories, interviews, TV programmes, plays, etc.
- ◇ a class or school newspaper devoted to literature
- ◇ lots of displays of students'/parents'/teachers' creations of literature

- ◇ lots of other displays
 - about writers
 - about film-makers
 - about magazines
 - about films
 - about what parents read in school twenty years ago
 - about the Principal's 10 favourite books
 - and so on
- ◇ talk about literature
- ◇ poetry readings and plays
- ◇ visiting "writers"
- ◇ an open night for parents
- ◇ visits to shopping and community centres
- ◇ **FUN**
- and ◇ **LEARNING**

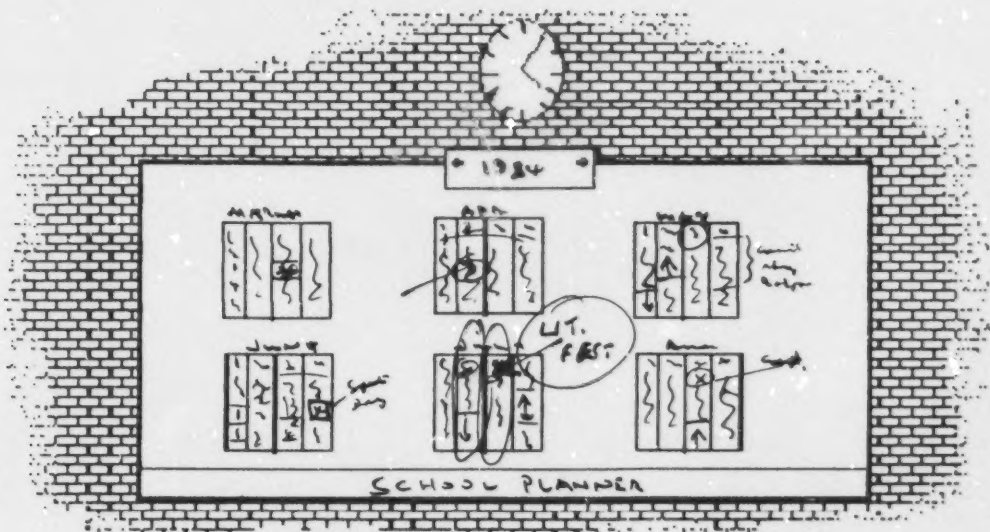
HOW BIG DOES IT HAVE TO BE ?



It can be as big or as small as you like, and this booklet will help you to plan and prepare realistically. It is better to take time and plan carefully, and we will show you how.

A Literature Festival can be run with a single class, or through a Resource Centre, but we strongly suggest that it is easier to organize and run, and will be more effective, when a group of staff and a wide range of students are involved.

WHAT TIME IS INVOLVED ?



The Literature Festival is a part of the year's activities in language, reading, writing, and media studies. It should be seen as part of the language / literature process, and not as a separate learning experience. So, a Literature Festival should make use of existing class work and class learning experiences.

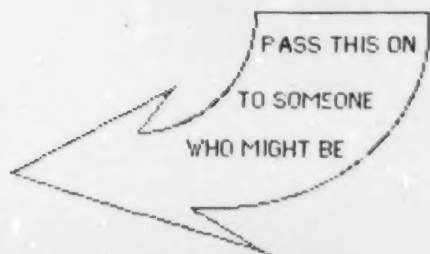
We think that the Literature Festival is a two week affair.

The first week is used for building displays, putting up posters, etc., and the second week is for sharing and reflecting. Most of the creating will need to have been done before these two weeks. It might be appropriate to have special days within the fortnight for plays, excursions, parent visits, etc.

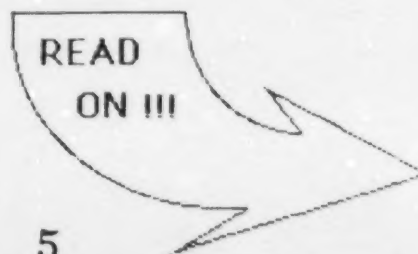
You will need to allow **8 to 10 weeks** for planning and preparation.

WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE ?

NOT INTERESTED ?



INTERESTED ?



INTERESTED ?



PEOPLE WHO MAY BE INTERESTED	
	YES/NO
1 The Principal.....	
2.....	
3.....	
4.....	
5.....	
6.....	
7.....	
8.....	

START YOUR PRELIMINARY LIST





2

THINKING ABOUT IT

WHY DO WE WANT A LITERATURE FESTIVAL?

In your preliminary discussions you need to think and talk about what it is that you hope to achieve by holding a Literature Festival

- ◇ for your students
- ◇ for the school
- ◇ for your school community
- ◇ for yourselves.

Make a list of expected outcomes. It might include some of the following, it will certainly contain others.

LIT. FEST. OUTCOMES			
STUDENTS	THE SCHOOL	PARENTS	US
More reading, performance	All teachers as readers	Knowledge of school's lit. teaching programme	
More positive attitude to literature	Demonstrate the status of lit. in the school	Sharing their children's work	
Greater understanding of literary process	Increase awareness of staff about kids + lit.	Home reading/viewing habits discussed	
Increase in range of literature available	Promote teachers as writers	Sharing their experiences with their children	
See themselves as creators of lit.	T.V. as literature? - discussion	Parents writing literature	
Share experiences	Resource centre as a focus of staff		Increasing awareness of writing/reading process
Have fun			Sharing our readings/viewings/writings
etc.	etc.		Staff theatre visit

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WHAT IS LITERATURE ? IS IT JUST READING ?

You will have gathered already that we do not think it is sound to base your Festival on a narrow or "classical" view of literature. We suggest you adopt the following definition from **A Single Impulse**, the South Australian Department of Education's publication on the teaching of literature.

Literature is centrally concerned with exploring and defining the value and meaning of human experience. The uniqueness of literature lies in the way it does this; through the imaginative re-creation and shaping of experience in language.

This definition includes oral literature, drama and film, and it links children's imaginative writings with the work of published authors in that it sees them as animated by a single impulse.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS DEFINITION ?

If you and your planning group accept this definition then you will need to discuss it and examine its implications.

You may choose to highlight some of the following:

- ◇ that literature includes
 - anecdote
 - story telling
 - drama
 - film
 - children's writing
- ◇ the links between your students' writing and the work of published authors
- ◇ the relationship between experience and the creation of literature.

Once you have accepted a definition of literature you can use it as the parameters for your planning, for your explanations of the Festival to others, and in your publicity.



3

MAKING DECISIONS

At this stage of your preliminary planning, you will need to consider the following:

1. ARE THERE OTHER STAFF WHO NEED TO BE INVOLVED?

teachers ?

...

...

'media' teacher ?

teacher/librarian ?

administration ?

aide ?

NO	YES

WRITE
IN NAMES

2. SHOULD THERE BE STUDENTS ON THE PLANNING GROUP?

NO	YES

WRITE
IN NAMES

3. OTHERS?

parents

community librarian

local writer

?????

?????

NO	YES

WRITE
IN NAMES

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WHO WILL COMMUNICATE DECISIONS ?

1. Who will make notes on decisions made, and distribute to members of this group?
2. Who will keep the administration informed?.....
3. Who will liaise with other teachers involved in the Literature Festival, and coordinate their involvement?
4. Who will keep other staff, not directly involved in the Literature Festival, informed?.....
5. Who will communicate with parents about the Literature Festival?

WHAT ABOUT THE KIDS ?

MAKE YOUR PLANNING RELEVANT TO THE PURPOSE.

If kids are not directly involved in the decision-making, they need to be:

- informed
- enthused
- and ▪ active at an early stage.

1. Who will be responsible for overall coordination of the student involvement?
2. Which students/classes will participate?
e.g. ♦ all classes in the school
♦ all Year 8 English classes
♦ years 5, 6, 7 only
♦ the Year Eleven Writing elective
♦ Ms Brown's classes only
♦ ??????????

Who will participate in your school?

.....

.....

.....

.....

THE SCOPE OF YOUR LITERATURE FESTIVAL

Will you have a special theme?

- e.g.
- ◇ Australian Literature
 - ◇ Literature & The Female Experience
 - ◇ Poetry & Art
 - ◇ Film & Literature
 - ◇ Pre-20th Century Literature
 - ◇ Multicultural Literature
 - ◇ Children's Literature Through The Ages
 - ◇ Aboriginal Literature
 - ◇ Literature Created by the Students

You don't have to have a special theme, but you should decide now.

.....

.....

.....

WHEN WILL THE LITERATURE FESTIVAL BE ?

Decide on dates. Leave about 8 to 10 weeks from now. Consider the school calendar. Which would be an appropriate time? (e.g., end of term, drama production time, mid-term, etc.)

How long will the Literature Festival be?.....

Any special days?.....

Dates of Literature Festival.....

PUBLICITY ?

Depending on the numbers involved, you will need to start this immediately. It will need to be directed at:

- ◇ students
- ◇ staff
- ◇ parents / community

Who will coordinate the publicity?

PLANNING MEETING TIMES AND DATES

Agree to meet again almost immediately, then plan to meet briefly each fortnight for the first six weeks of the planning time, and then weekly. Most meetings should not need to exceed an hour. Plan for a longer meeting in the week before the Literature Festival.

	DATE	TIMES	PLACE
1 {next}		TO.....	
2		TO.....	
3		TO.....	
4		TO.....	
5		TO.....	
6		TO.....	
7 {long}		TO.....	

COFFEE ?
WINE ?
EATS ?

✱ THE LITERATURE FESTIVAL ✱

END THIS MEETING NOW, FOR HAVING DECIDED ALL THIS

YOU

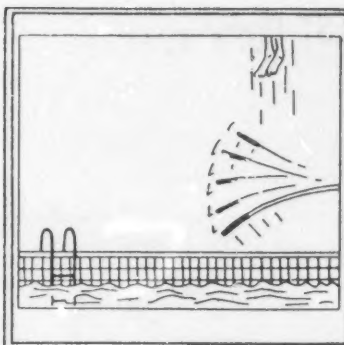
ARE

READY

TO

JUMP

IN !!!!!!!!!



4

JUMPING IN.....

READY

At the second and subsequent meetings of your group, you will have to discuss details of "who's - doing - what - when?"

Some questions already raised will need to be resolved. Thus this section needs to be read in relation to the previous sections, and with the sections on Things To Do and Resources which follow.

If you haven't already done so, you will need to discuss:

- ◇ the group's general understanding of what will be happening during the Literature Festival.

Starter statement:

A visitor to the school during the Literature Festival will notice.....

- ◇ how the Literature Festival will reflect and be part of the school's policies and practices in teaching literature.

Starter statements:

The Literature Festival will reflect and develop the following aspects of our literature teaching programme

After the Literature Festival, my / our literature teaching programme will include

- ◇ the Literature Festival's outcomes for students, the school, parents, and you. (See the Thinking About It section.)

Starter statement:

The Literature Festival will be a success if

- ◊ the definition of literature you will adopt.

Starter statement:

Literature is

SET.....

Spend 15 to 20 minutes brainstorming the possible activities which might be undertaken by

- ◊ students
- ◊ teachers
- ◊ parents and the community.

Go through the examples in the Things To Do section, and add any of those to your list which you think may be useful.

Now categorize your activities, and start to expand upon them.

The type of literature festival you are planning will determine your categories. They might be:

<u>INDIVIDUAL STUDENT</u>	<u>WHOLE CLASS</u>	<u>SCHOOL</u>
1. Make a poster - book review	1. Write to the local paper about the Literature Festival	1. Open display night for parents
2. Write a poem-poster	2. Mount a display on Shakespeare	2. Visiting writer to speak at an assembly
3. Interview parents about a favourite book or film	3. Organize a reading of pop-poetry	3. Teachers to make posters on their favourite works
4. Interview teachers about their memories	4. Make a film on the	

OR.....

<u>MINIMAL PLANNING</u>	<u>EXTENSIVE PLANNING</u>
1. Each class make a poster	2. Organize special assembly
	3. Special library display
	4. Story writing competition
	5. Each student copy out the best story he/she has written so far

Allow time for teachers and students to opt for the suggested activities.
Follow up the decision communication procedures carefully.

Then it's a matter of making a master list of:

- WHO is interested in doing
- WHAT activity
- WHEN, both before the Literature Festival, and during,
- with WHOM.



This master list is then set against a countdown poster which is displayed in

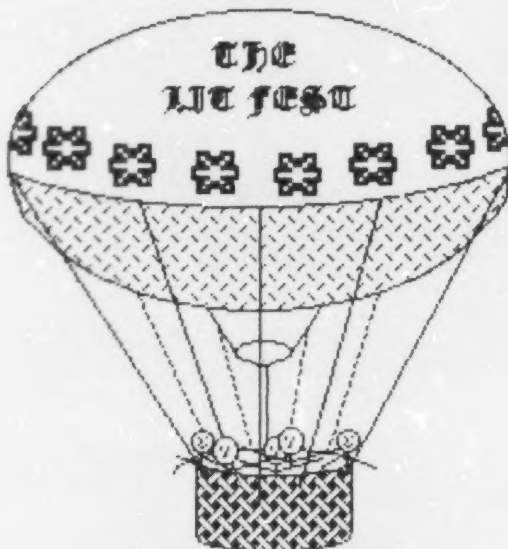
- ◇ the staffroom
- ◇ the classroom
- ◇ the foyer of the school.

It may resemble the following:

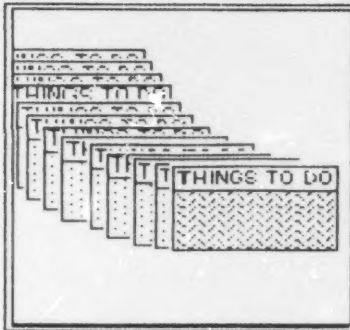
LITERATURE FESTIVAL COUNTDOWN	
WEEKS TO GO	THINGS TO BE DONE
8	Ms Rogers to contact Colin Thiele All Eng. classes 6 - 10 to commence poetry posters Preliminary notice in Newsletter [Mr Blake] Publicity posters [Frank's Yr 11 Art class Year level student meetings - Lit Fest speil [N.H.]
7	Launch of story writing competition[B.D.] Media Studies class [Yr 10] make film Local library approached re display [Joan] Play "rehearsals" for class drama production
6	801 class interview staff about favourite books and make posters [R.M.] Poetry posters to Mr Watson for laminating Book making - all classes Year 11 's select favourite picture books and read to Junior Primary classes Confirm Thiele booking

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There will be some changes needed, and you should be prepared to be flexible in your planning, but this should carry you through to.....



GOOD LUCK ! ! !



THINGS TO DO

What follows is a random list of things that might happen during a Literature Festival. Some involve minimal planning, others require extensive thought. They are not categorised, nor is the list meant to be exhaustive. They are simply some ideas that have arisen during a brief brainstorming session.

1. A class/school newspaper, special Literature Festival edition, publishing students', teachers', parents' writings (stories, articles, reviews, etc.).
2. Rainbow display. Seven pieces of different coloured card, with kids' writing, stories, poems, reviews, bits of favourite books, etc., for each class.
3. A writer display. Select a writer (e.g. Shakespeare, Judy Blume, Patricia Wrightson, etc.) and make a display using posters, costumes, odds and ends based on the writer and his or her worlds (actual and in the writing.)
4. Students interview their parents about reading and viewing habits. Discuss the results in class, write up in books, make displays, etc.
5. Lots of displays
 - In "safe" places (staffroom, classroom, corridors, gymnasium, canteen, shop windows, resource centre.)
 - In "unsafe" places, try laminating posters or using photocopies (changerooms, toilets, some classrooms, outside in the school yard.)
6. Run a short story writing competition (with school support), publish writers' entries, make into a display.
7. Make a video for other classes to see. Display it on open night.
8. Get a writer in to talk to staff and students about writing. Use students who are good writers to visit other classes and talk. (e.g. a good Year 10 writer could visit a Year 8 class who have read her story.)

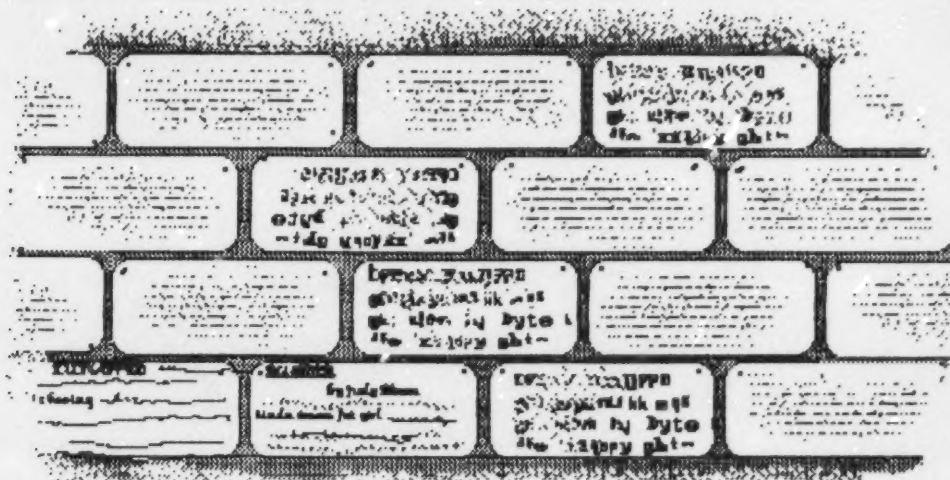
9. Children's literature through the ages. Make a display of research.
10. "Teachers as readers" posters.

	MR JOHNSON AND LITERATURE
<u>WHY READING IS IMPORTANT TO ME</u> _____ _____ _____	Favourite books..... Favourite films.....

Devise a format for a class to follow. Pairs of students interview teachers on favourite books and films, and reasons. Also get them to comment on reading. Turn into posters. Display around the school.

11. Set the same writing topic (something bland, like "Me", "The Black Dog", "Tomorrow", etc.) to a class in each year level (using the local primary/high school where appropriate) from Reception to Year Twelve, and make a display of the best at each level to show growth, and to highlight the role of experience. Make class booklets, one piece from each year level, for class reading.
12. Set up a staff only library evening/"happy hour". Bring along your favourite poem, launch the "Teachers As Readers" posters, swap books, drink wine (it'll help), etc.
13. Great female writers. Posters, displays, etc.
14. Use the back pages of the daily school bulletin to reproduce poems, parts of stories, run a serial for teachers to read to their classes.
15. Organize some activities in your local Community Centre or Shopping Centre:
 - ◇ readings
 - ◇ displays
 - ◇ interviews of shoppers.
16. Write some poems and dramatize them.
17. Organize a giant book swap.

18. Build a "Book Review Wall". Each student in the school is given an A4 piece of paper. Write short paragraph review on it. Shade the edges of the A4 paper to simulate mortar. Place the poster reviews as "bricks" on a classroom, library wall.

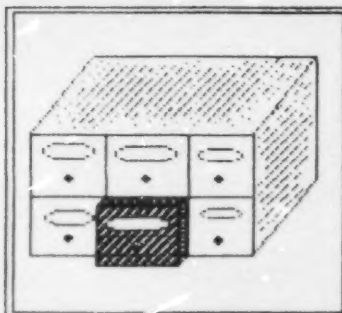


Just Another Brick In The Wall !

19. Collect anecdotes on tape. Visit various places (other classes, old people's homes, staffroom, etc.) and collect anecdotes on the same topic. ("When I was five.....", "An event I remember")
20. Stories from other lands. Organize some parents to read brief poems in their native language, and then translations. Collect an anthology on the multi-cultural Australian literature. Reflect on the multi-culture.
21. Put on a "public" drama lesson, play reading or play. This may be done on video for other classes to discuss.

..... and so on.....

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**6**

RESOURCES

Most valuable resources are within the school!
The following are starting points only.

BOOKS

- ☐ A Single Impulse available from the S.A. Department of Education, \$4.50.
An excellent framework for considering the role of literature in teaching, with practical advice as well.
- ☐ The Rib-It Programme,
Tadpole Press,
P.O. Box 432,
Hawthorne, Vic. 3122.
A complete set for starting a sure to succeed reading programme in a school, involving motivational certificates, a detailed Implementation guide, and a million good ideas.
- ☐ SAETA's Spring Poetry Festival books, particularly the 1983 edition, with poetry posters and teaching notes, available through
The Secretary,
SAETA,
163a Greenhill Road,
Parkside, SA 5063.
- ☐ A Reading Workbook by N. Howard and J. Dellitt, available at 40¢ a copy from SMART,
P.O. Box 187,
Elizabeth, SA 5112.
A short "write-in" workbook for students to record their responses to literature. Motivational. Teachers' Notes included.
- ☐ Literature For Adolescents, No. 1, available from the S.A. Department of Education, \$3.50.
Excellent examples of reviews, as well as a useful guide for selecting appropriate literature for students.

PEOPLE

Before you look outside the school community, carefully consider the wealth of talent within it.

For help in finding out about and hiring a visiting writer, contact

- ◇ the Literature Board
- ◇ the Writers' Union
- ◇ the S.A. Poets' Union
- ◇ The School Libraries Branch
- ◇ your Area Library Advisor
- ◇ your Area Language Arts Advisor
- ◇ your Area English Advisor
- ◇ the English Consultant
- ◇ the Arts In Education Team (Wattle Park Teachers' Centre)

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